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National
Co-ordinating
Centre for
Public Engagement

RESEARCH
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Spontaneous

Spontaneous

Infrastructure
Little infrastructure is in place to support the partnership – it tends to rely on pre-existing relationships between individuals or a direct approach to a teacher/lecturer to offer a one off experience.

Purpose
Mainly university-led, motivated by a desire to do 'outreach' and/or offer development opportunities for researchers. It's a good way to bring research into schools – with potential to develop it further. Mainly fuelled by the passion of those involved, who are keen to see students inspired by contact with research(ers). This model appeals to teachers who are time poor, who realise the opportunity afforded by a researcher participating in a classroom session.

Relationship
Mainly held at an individual level with little involvement of anyone else from either organisation. It may not be clear who to contact if things go wrong.

Activities
Ad hoc opportunities for researchers to work with students; often involve conventional 'outreach' activities e.g. talks, lectures, workshops.

What's its value?
When the activities are framed well, it can be a great opportunity for students to meet a researcher and learn more about research. It can also provide inspiration to the teacher, and skills development for the researcher.

Challenges
Quality can be poor. Constant reinvention of activities, with no opportunity for sharing learning, or developing reusable activities. No clear route for new schools to get involved.

Resource implications
Requires teachers and researchers to commit time to the project. Can be inefficient as developing one off activities can be more costly than investing in a sustained approach.

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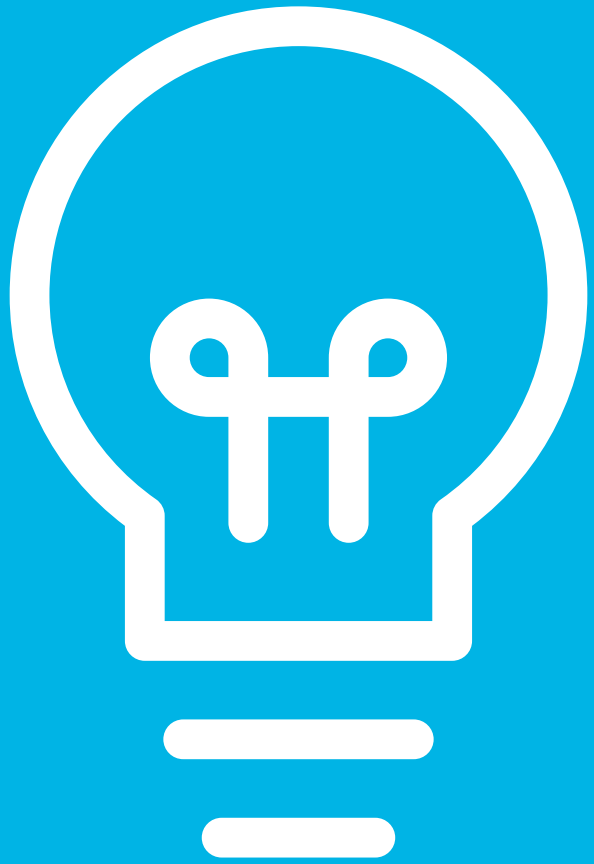

Inspired

Inspired

Infrastructure
There are HE staff dedicated to developing 'outreach' opportunities. The team approaches schools with opportunities and invites them to get involved. Schools have little say in the nature of the activities, but can participate in those relevant to them.

Purpose
Mainly university-led, potentially motivated by a desire to do 'outreach' and/or offer development opportunities for researchers. Seeks to develop a good 'offer' for the schools that take part, and keen to reach specific schools. Focussed on individual interventions rather than an overarching strategy.

Relationships
Attempts are being made to understand the different cultures of universities and schools and consider how to partner more effectively; clear aims and objectives established.

Activities
Purposeful. A programme of activities develops. Researchers receive training in school engagement and curriculum resources, enabling them to develop more relevant activities.

What's its value?
Schools can choose to get involved, selecting from the opportunities on offer. Researchers develop their skills that lead to more effective activities. Evaluation is undertaken, using methods that are appropriate to the audience and activity; this helps inform future activity and assess the value to all involved.

Challenges
Dependent on key individuals, so partnership is vulnerable to staff changes. Schools not able to feed in their expertise to inform ideas and their development.

Resource implications
Dedicated member of staff in university who brokers the relationships. Time commitment from teachers and researchers involved. Costs of activities developed.

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Thoughtful

Thoughtful

Infrastructure
Dedicated staff in the university and school work together to develop shared aims and objectives. Resources are allocated to support the plan that has been developed, with regular meetings to ensure it is delivering effectively to all involved. Events and training are provided; and evaluation is used effectively to ensure the partnership works well.

Purpose
University and school are committed to realising mutual benefit from the partnership. This informs the shape of the interventions planned.

Activities
A suite of opportunities for students and researchers to engage both in universities and in the classroom, and across a range of disciplines. Opportunities are provided for teachers and researchers to explore potential collaborations together e.g. networking fairs; training for researchers continues to be offered, meeting personal and professional development needs.

Relationships
Strengthened by a shared and explicit understanding of how to collaborate effectively which may be supported by a partnership agreement. The relationship is long term and both sides invest energy and effort to make it work. It is clear how schools might initiate engagement with universities in a way that is relevant to their needs.

What's its value?
Opens up opportunities to develop strategic relationships with a small number of schools, benefitting a wide range of teachers, students and researchers.

Challenges
Requires significant time commitment. Difficult to negotiate the partnership in an equitable way, with pressures on time for teachers and researchers; and problems in scheduling meetings due to limited availability. Fewer relationships of this nature are possible.

Resource implications
Dedicated staff in university and school(s) involved. Significant time commitment from teachers and researchers involved in developing activity. Resources needed to host fairs; run training; develop resources; and evaluation.

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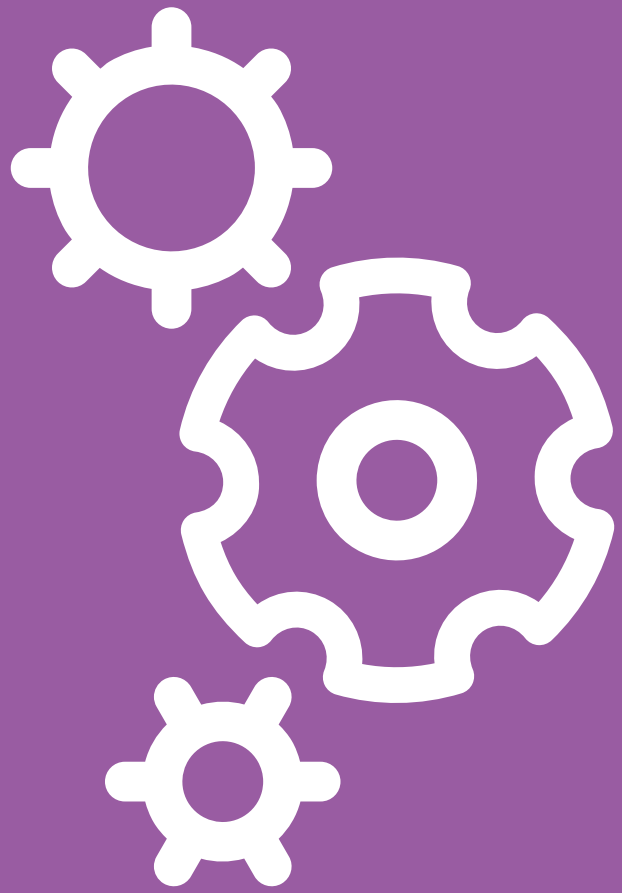

Strategic

Strategic

Infrastructure
Dedicated staff in the university and school work together against shared aims and objectives. Resources are allocated to support the plan that has been developed, with regular meetings to ensure it is delivering effectively to all involved. Events and training are provided; and evaluation is used effectively. Aims are embedded in university and school strategies.

Purpose
Strong school-university partnership delivering against its mutually beneficial aims including to enhance teacher development; researcher skills development; and inspiring school students to engage with researchers and research in order to raise their aspirations and equip them to carry out their own research projects.

Activities
School and university are working together for long term benefit, co-developing content and 'off the shelf' activities; training is accredited and recognised on both sides and opportunities offered – this training could be reciprocal.

Relationships
Involve strong strategic support for the partnership from the university and school(s) with a commitment to sustaining the activity e.g. schools commit to a link teacher (despite staff turnover) while universities create an 'architecture' to support contacts. Project has an institutional home at the university and is supported by a permanent member of staff. Accountability is explicit – e.g. schools responsible for student progression data, universities responsible for effective public engagement. Schools and universities have an understanding of each other's 'languages' and cultures.

What's its value?
Evaluation involves a multifaceted strategy, including assessment of the quality of work itself and a cycle of QA. Evaluation produces evidence that the partnership is working and delivering value to all involved. Connections are made between different university and school strategies to help deliver value e.g. pupil premium funding.

Challenges
Requires significant time commitment. Difficult to negotiate partnership in an equitable way, with pressures on time for teachers and researchers; and problems in scheduling meetings due to limited availability. Can lead to less innovative or spontaneous approaches.

Resource implications
Requires dedicated staff in the university and school(s) involved. Time commitment from teachers and researchers involved. Resources needed to host fairs; run training; develop resources; and evaluation. However, efficiency savings are realised due to the more strategic approach.